



Pamm Shaw

Independent Consultant

Pamm Shaw is an early education leader with more than 40 years of experience as a teacher, administrator, trainer, and director. As the former VP/Executive Director at the YMCA of the East Bay, she led innovative workforce initiatives, including the Early Educator Apprenticeship Program, training over 500 participants. She now consults on systems change and workforce development in early childhood education.

Contra Costa County ECE Workforce Landscape Analysis & Future Opportunities

Introduction

High level assessment of local ECE system, including:

- Workforce strengths and challenges
- Compensation and retention issues
- Career pathways and professional supports
- Funding, partnerships and system coordination

Identify gaps, opportunities and priorities to guide future planning, investments and policy decisions.

ECE Workforce is Essential Infrastructure

- Approximately 4,000 early educators in this county
- Racial/ethnically diverse
- Highly experienced and educated

Why This Matters

Contra Costa County Early Educators, 2024

	Family Child Care Provider	Center Educator
Women of color	89%	66%
Born outside U.S.	37%	17%
Speak language other than English	60%	48%
AA degree	30%	23%
BA degree or higher	30%	34%
16+ years of experience	68%	79%
Use of public assistance	39%	43%

Source: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2024

ECE Workforce is Essential Infrastructure

Yet programs face:

- Staff shortages
- High turnover
- Burnout and stress
- Difficulty recruiting qualified educators

Fewer children being served means
parents not able to work

Early Educator Earnings in Contra Costa Slightly Lower than Statewide Averages

Type of ECE Educator	Median Annual Earnings	
	Contra Costa County	Statewide
Family Child Care Provider	\$30,000 - \$35,900	\$36,000 - \$45,000
Center Director	\$64,500	\$63,800

Note: Head Start and Title V center-based programs typically generally offer stronger compensation and benefits. More stable wages lead to more stability and retention, yet disparities continue to exist among programs.

What the Research Tells Us

No single strategy solves ECE workforce instability

- Competitive compensation
- Professional supports
- Career pathways
- Systems coordination and data

Key Research Findings

Compensation
attracts educators.

Coaching, leadership,
and workplace supports
help retain them.

Clear professional
pathways support
educators' success.

Existing ECE Workforce Supports in Contra Costa County

Goal	Current Landscape
Recruitment	Embedded in higher education systems, several partnerships for adults and youth
On-the-Job Supports	Largest concentration of existing efforts
Retention	Smallest reach

Opportunity #1

Improve Compensation and Benefits

- Compensation is the strongest predictor of recruitment and retention.
- High need for supports that specifically focus on retention
- Potential Strategies:
 - Wage supplements
 - Benefit expansion
 - Retention initiatives
 - Compensation parity strategies
 - Improved working conditions
 - Public investment and advocacy

Opportunity #2

Prioritize Supports That Improve Retention

- Coaching, mentoring, and supportive leadership are among the strongest non-salary predictors of retention.
- Effective supports include:
 - Practice-based coaching
 - Mentoring
 - Leadership development
 - Reflective supervision
 - Professional learning communities

Opportunity #3

Expand Credit-Bearing Career Pathways

- Enhance access to credit-bearing pathways
- Potential Strategies:
 - Shorter term apprenticeship models paired with financial support
 - Models that meet the needs of family child care providers
 - Tuition supports
 - Wage progression tied to credentials
 - Partnerships with community colleges

Next Steps

Leverage existing early childhood education structures and partnerships.

Engage business and workforce development as key partners.

Build support for funding to address early childhood education needs.

Conclusion

When implemented together
—these three opportunities
support long-term economic health:

- Strengthen workforce stability
- Improve program quality
- Expand access for families

A more stable early childhood education workforce strengthens the entire field and provides greater stability for the families who depend on child care in order to work and support their own families.

VOICES FROM ECE EDUCATORS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Elliana Campos

FCC Owner, Founder of
NCAL Family Child Care Alliance

Rachel Bymun

FCC Owner, County Rep
for Statewide FCC Union

Kimberley Ciranda

Educator, YMCA of the East Bay,
Youth Apprentice Graduate

Salome Bond-Cummings

Educator, YMCA of the East Bay,
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